



City of Hampton

MEMORANDUM

TO: All Citizens Interested in the Future of the Wythe Elementary School Site

FROM: Mary Bunting, City Manager

Mary Bunting

Dr. Linda Shifflette, Superintendent, Hampton City Schools

Dr. Linda Shifflette

DATE: June 10, 2013

SUBJ: Rumors Regarding the Re-use of the Wythe Elementary School Site

On May 16, 2013, Hampton City Schools and the City of Hampton hosted an initial meeting to begin community discussion regarding possible re-uses of the Wythe Elementary School site. At this meeting, it was explained that this process of identifying and analyzing various potential re-uses would continue over the course of the next several months. During this timeframe, additional opportunities for the public to express their preferences and review the analysis performed by staff assigned to this effort will be arranged.

We have become aware of rumors which have been circulating that the City and Hampton City Schools are already considering this site for subsidized housing and/or a homeless shelter. Both of us want to assure the community that there is absolutely no truth to such rumors. We are both committed to conducting a deliberate and thoughtful community conversation regarding possible re-uses for this significant site in our community. The results of this community engagement will be forwarded to the Hampton School Board for their consideration at the conclusion of the process.

There are two important facts to understand regarding any potential re-use of this property. The first and most obvious is the property is owned by Hampton City Schools, so any re-use would have to have the endorsement of the Hampton School Board. The second fact is the property is zoned R-11 which generally permits such uses as single family homes, churches, and schools (for a complete list of permitted land uses in the R-11 zoning category, please see the Hampton Zoning Ordinance). Any potential use outside of these permitted categories will require a rezoning that would have to be approved by Hampton City Council.

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Whatever use is ultimately approved must be one which enhances the surrounding neighborhood, is consistent with our community's long range plan, and is viewed as an asset by our community. Neither of the rumored uses are consistent with the existing community plan guidance, or early community sentiment.

The purpose of the recently initiated community process is to identify one or more possible re-use options which meet this standard. It is true that Hampton City Schools and City staff have been approached by a prospective development group interested in renovating the existing building for residential units. In fact, we understand that this development group has also met with neighborhood representatives to discuss their interest. This group has been advised that no serious consideration will be given to their proposal or any other proposal until such time as recommendations from the community process are in hand and presented to the Hampton School Board.

It is our hope that this information helps to refocus our collective efforts on exploring potential re-use options that will be viewed as an asset to the community. If you have any further questions or wish additional information regarding the community process now underway, please feel free to contact the primary staff assigned to this effort: Jonathan McBride, Neighborhood Development Associate II (jmcbride@hampton.gov), or Mike Hayes, Senior City Planner (mdhayes@hampton.gov or phone 757-727-6140).

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